

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2017

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the over six million veterans nationwide who rely on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system, we are writing to respectfully request that you provide guidance indicating that exempting VA direct patient care providers is consistent with the tenants of and latitude permitted in your January 23rd Executive Order pertaining to a Federal civilian employee hiring freeze.

One of our government's highest priorities - and VA's single most important mission - is to provide timely, high-quality care to the men and women who have bravely served our nation in uniform. A robust clinical workforce is vital to achieving that goal. As VA direct care providers play a critical public health role, we believe that this action is in line with your intent to exempt positions necessary to meet public safety from the effects of this hiring freeze.

Also, as you have rightfully recognized many times before, the VA healthcare system is currently in a state of crisis. We must ensure that, while we work toward our mutual goal of VA healthcare reform, VA is not further hampered by an inability to recruit high-quality clinicians to meet the immediate health care needs of our veterans.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to hearing from you soon and to working closely with you and your Administration to honor and serve our veterans and their families.

Sincerely,



DAVID P. ROE
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives



JOHNNY ISAKSON
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. Senate

cc: Robert Snyder, Acting Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs